

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A payment service method, the method comprising:
 - a payment service provider receiving a set of identifiers from a consumer provider associated with dial tone service of the consumer provider, wherein the dial tone service is configured to provide direct and uninterrupted access to telecommunication services;
 - the payment service provider receiving a request from a customer of the consumer provider to pay for the dial tone service, wherein the request includes one of the identifiers and a payment;
 - creating an electronic record of the payment and the identifier;
 - communicating the electronic record to a host computer;
 - electronically sending the electronic record from the host computer to a telecommunication switch; and
 - activating the dial tone service upon receipt of the electronic record by the telecommunication switch, wherein communication of the electronic record to the telecommunication switch is configured to provide that the dial tone service is activated substantially contemporaneously with receipt of the payment by the payment service provider.
2. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising electronically transferring the payment to a bank account of the consumer provider.
3. (canceled)
4. (previously presented) A method as in claim 1, wherein the request is entered into a terminal having a processor, and wherein the electronic record is transferred electronically from the terminal to the host computer.

5. (previously presented) A method as in claim 4, wherein the electronic record is further transmitted from the host computer to the consumer provider.

6. (original) A method as in claim 4, wherein the set of identifiers are associated with enrollment information obtained from consumers enrolling with the consumer provider, and further comprising electronically sending enrollment information from the consumer provider to the host computer.

7. (original) A method as in claim 6, further comprising periodically receiving updated enrollment information at the host computer.

8-9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) A method as in claim 1, wherein at least some part of the identifier is associated with a payment amount as determined by the consumer provider.

11. (canceled).

12. (previously presented) A payment system, comprising:
a host computer;

a database associated with the host computer, the database having a record of a set of identifiers that are associated with a dial tone phone service of a consumer provider; and

a telecommunication switch in communication with the host computer and configured to activate the dial tone service for a customer phone number upon receipt of an electronic record from the host computer, wherein the electronic record comprises an identifier from the set of identifiers, the customer phone number and payment information, and wherein the dial tone service provides for direct access to phone services from a phone associated with the customer phone number.

13. (previously presented) A system as in claim 12, further comprising at least one terminal having a processor that is capable of communicating with the host computer, and wherein the terminal is configured to receive the identifier, the customer phone number and

the payment information and to transmit the identifier, the customer phone number and the payment information to the host computer.

14. (canceled)

15. (original) A system as in claim 13, further comprising a printer coupled to the terminal to print a receipt showing the payment.

16-24 (canceled)

25. (Currently amended) A method for activating a phone service, the method comprising:

a customer establishing an account with a consumer provider for the phone service, wherein the customer provides information to the consumer provider to establish the account and receives an account identifier from the consumer provider, and wherein the account requires a payment to a payment service provider for activation of the phone service;

the payment service provider electronically receiving account information from the consumer provider;

the payment ~~supervisor~~ service provider receiving periodic updates of the account information from the consumer provider, wherein the updates comprise a status of the account;

the payment service provider receiving the required payment and the account identifier from the customer;

entering payment information and the account identifier into a terminal and creating an electronic record of the payment and the account identifier;

communicating the electronic record to a host computer;

using a database associated with the host computer to verify the status of the account; and

electronically activating the phone service in substantially real-time, wherein the host computer is configured to communicate the electronic record to a service activation

processor of the consumer provider and the service activation processor is configured to provide an activation command to a telecommunication switch to activate the phone service for the account upon receipt of the electronic record.

26-28. (canceled)

29. (previously presented) A method as in claim 25, further comprising sending the payment to a bank account of the consumer provider.

30-49. (canceled)

50. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the activating the dial tone service comprises adding service time to an existing dial tone service associated with the customer.

51. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the one of the identifiers comprises at least a phone number associated with the customer.

52. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the activation of the activation of the dial tone service comprises adding service time to an existing dial tone service associated with the customer telephone number.

53. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the electronically activating the phone service comprises adding service time to an existing phone service associated with the customer.